



Lynn R. Johnson/The Salt Lake Trib

David Grow of Provo owns the tram and concessions at Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon. Wednesday's avalanche wiped out his facilities, which were not insured. Damage estimates at the site range from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Provo Canyon Slides Have Killed Four Over the Years

By Robert Kirby and Ann Shields
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

PROVO — The huge avalanche in Provo Canyon on Wednesday was the latest in a string of slides that have claimed at least four lives since 1897 and made the canyon's road impassable, sometimes for weeks at a time.

The first recorded death from an avalanche in Provo Canyon happened on Feb. 19, 1897. William Ferguson was killed around midnight when his house near South Fork, approximately two miles above Bridal Veil Falls, was crushed in a torrent of moving snow.

Despite the avalanche danger, Ferguson customarily wintered in the canyon, providing shelter to travelers who braved the two-day trek between Provo and Heber City.

The slide also killed Ferguson's cat and dog.

Twenty-seven years later, in March

1924, an avalanche killed three Denver Rio Grande Western employees.

The victims were members of a five-man crew hired to remove the snow and debris of two previous avalanches from the railroad tracks near Bridal Veil Falls.

The group was packing 50-pound bundles of dynamite through the slide area when they stopped to rest. Without warning, an avalanche plunged down Cascade Mountain, carrying two of the men to their deaths.

The third victim was hurled 250 feet through the trees by the avalanche.

It took crews five days to dig out the bodies.

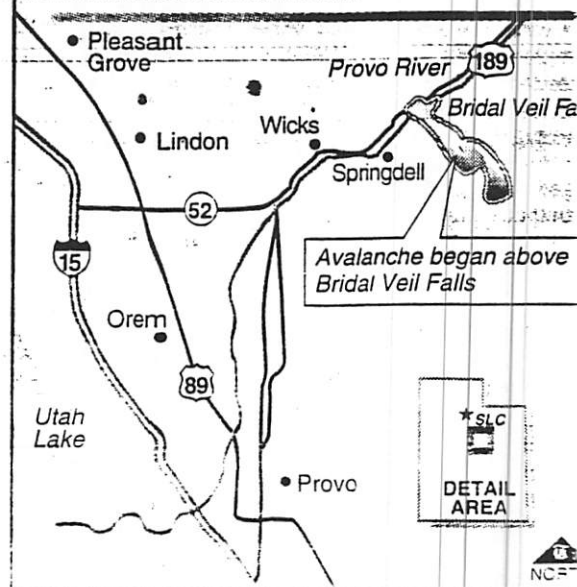
Despite the increase in traffic, there have been no avalanche-related fatalities in the canyon in recent years. There have been close calls, however.

In 1993, an avalanche destroyed the

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Provo Canyon Avalanche

A 60-foot wall of snow pushing 200-mph winds roared down the south side of Provo Canyon Wednesday blocking the Provo River, forcing an evacuation of some Springdell homes and burying tourist concessions at the falls.



Rhonda H. Mavett/The Salt Lake Trib